Route 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
1/26/73

Dear Bob,

It has been a long time. Although I was far past tiredness and emotionally uptight, I remember the very pleasant lunch to which you and Jessica took me next to the last time I was out that way. I have reformed a bit since then and now try to average six hours sleep. I have continued with the same and related work. It has been bankrupting, requiting intellectually only, giving the kind of lift doing the impossible can provide.

One of these impossibles is largely responsible for my delay in answering your letter of the 18th. I am James Earl Ray's investigator. After completing my book on the King assassination, without ever meeting or corresponding with him, I was able to persuade Ray to ask a friend of mine to represent him. This wealthy lawyer professed interest in the assassinations and their consequences but like so many, soon got paranoid about them, then disspirited. He has done nothing except impede progress. A bright young lawyer, who has yet to try his first case or even have a client has done all the legal work, based on my investigations. Recently we filed a book-length petition habeas corpus in federal court in Nashville. The State filed and answer. We now have the draft of our Traverse (I think the kid has done a great job). Today I go to Washington with 2,500 words of notes and suggestions on the Traverse, after which he will correct and type the Traverse and file it.

This Ray/King case is incredible. Knowing what is true, I still can't believe such things can happen. This kid and I are having a helluva time keeping it from happening all over again. There was no case against Ray at all. Foreman came into the case only to put him away for the government. I have not been able to really investigate Foreman, but I have two other cases where he did similar things for the mob, exculpating the guilty by convicting his client.

Anyway, I'll have that off my back by tonight. Tomorrow we have long-standing medical appointments in Washington also (we are 50 miles away) and I have to see if anything can be done for a young man adopted by Neil's sister who got into trouble and was screwed by the police. Under my influence he started to straighten himself out. He went to the cops with me and offered to tell them what he knew of what interested them if he would not be hurt. They told him there were no charges against him and they would do nothing so he talked. They promptly filed nine charges against him and deny all else. His lawyer has the problem of figuring out what now will hurt him least. We can prove the cops are lying, but the lawyer feels he may get burned worse if he can't make a deal on a lesser charge for the kid. If this lawyer has no need for me before Monday, when trial is scheduled, I hope to be able to go over my files and make photocopies of enough to tell you whether you have a chance of collecting for me. The company is the Raymar Book Co., of Monrovia, a Los Angeles suburb.

Our financial situation is so bad I'll have to know what the costs you will want advanced are. We are about $35,000 in debt with only slight regular income, what my wife makes this time of the year as a tax consultant. We have more than $50,000 owed us, with little prospect of recovery, I fear, largely because of dismal experiences with lawyers. If you feel the chances are good, I'll be able to borrow the costs.

I hope Jessica hasn't had the experiences I've had with publishers. They are crooked enough without the certainty that if they are pressed they'd have what they know they'll have with me, federal sympathy. I have copies of editions of my works never accounted for, contracts under which I've never gotten a cent, even proofs of sales in excess of what I've been paid for. In six years I've not been able to get the New York lawyer to do anything, even when he says he has a tight case, including clear mail fraud.

Do you know a good New York lawyer?

I don't know if when we lunched I told you what happened to our farm and us. We were ruined by low-flying military helicopters. Literally. Even the Secretary of Defense couldn't stop it. He tried. For a while the general counsel of the Defense Department represented us against the Army! Ever hear of such a thing? We won a precedent suit and that didn t stop it. We sued for trespass. The first case citing it as precedent was affirmed by the Supreme Court. I understand but do not know that it was also precedent cited in the recent Los Angeles Airport case. Perhaps the most surprising thing is that we won at all because the case was never prepared and that lawyer let the statute run on some of the damages for the period subsequent to the period sued for. When I learned this, I stopped the running of the statute administratively. We got a new lawyer, Edward Bennett Williams. He assigned a bright young man to the case and things started out promisingly. By that time I had started to work on the Warren Commission. As it turned out, Williams is one of Warren's best friends and the young lawyer had been Warren's law clerk! They then just stalled for years, about six. Finally, the young lawyer moved to California to start a political career. He wrote a letter abandoning us from Arizona. I then got a new lawyer in Baltimore and after a year and a half finally prodded him into action. When another lawyer in his firm learned what had happened to us, he got all steamed up about doing the courtroom work. He just couldn't believe that such a thing could happen. So, the latest development is that the government now claims Williams let the statute run on about 90% of what I'd stopped it on. They may be right. I don t know.

Do I sound like an updated character from Sholem Aleichem?

This, mid you, with a case where collection is automatic. Until I got the Baltimore lawyer I was pro se. The judge got after the U.S.Attorney when I offered to negotiate a settlement, telling him in my presence that he had already ruled on the case and the sole question was proof of loss. Even so the government stalled for almost two years.

Actually, when JFK was killed I was working on a book on all of this. I lost that agent when I started the JFK work. We had a handshake deal for the book, with Crown. I also found that my emotional involvement was such that I was incapable of the light touch needed. I had and have in mind a combination of Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House and The Egg and I, a novel but all true. We really were internationally famous as farmers.

When no agents would touch assassination writing I became my own. In may of 1965 I interested the Saturday Evening Post in chapter use of my first book, Whitewash. He had a $1,000 check waiting for him for just signing contracts. Two weeks later the deal was off and he had no interest in this book I had tentativelt titled Everything Happens. He had said it certainly would make a movie. The whole thing was a mystery to me until the Watergate case. I had had my own painful experiences with revanchist Cubans, beginning with Whitewash, which exposes some of them and says Oswald was intelligence. Two of the Watergate characters are in my files. I have the FBI reports on them. So, I took a perfunctory look at the case and lo! E. Howard Hunt, the macher in the deal, <u>while he was still in CIA</u>, also was with this same literary agency to which the Post had sent me. He maintained this connection through all the years of active assassination publishing.

If this doesn't sound paranoid enough, I have carbon copies of CIA surveillance on me. More than this alone. Details and proofs.

I have an added point in this. I do think the book on what happened to us could make a movie. I'll never be able to detach myself enough to do a good job on it. I'd very much like a collaborator. Does Hessica know someone who might be interested?

Actually, I'm overloaded with viable literary materials I'll be able to do nothing about. The curse on me in publishing, mostly for inventing the underground book and making a success of it, can t be overcome. I've recently given several away for an interest in them. At least one, if a good job, should have movie possibilties. Another for which I haven t found the right writer is a kind of Citizen Kane. Several years ago the former FBI agent who was then H.L.Hunt's chief of security, became and remains a friend. (Hunt offered me a job in November 1971, as his ghost!) Spooks are not writers. And this guy is no Clifford Irving. The famous and infamous Hunt sons got him when he got the old man to make modest provisions for a couple of bastards. If you don t know it, Hunt began as a whorehopping, wild-west card sharp, led a brawling life until he struck it rich in oil. I have

met him on his invitation until the Hunt boys got him. He'd check with me on the extremists after the old man's money. He gave much to them. Often I could give Paul enough for him to stop it. In his business, Paul is sharp. When he knew the boys were out to get him because they wanted to isolate the old man and keep all his great wealth for themselves, he also knew wh at to do. He caught them bugging him and wiretapping, complete with equipment, tapes, etc. It ended in a lawsuit he won, establishing his credentials as other than a Clifford Irving.

I ramble, the sun comes and I must get ready to go. I have gone into some of these things, and theyx are only samples of the yield of the kind of life I've led for the past seven or eight years, in the hope that Jessica might know someone who could be interested in writing some of these stories.

If you ever come east, we and the bank share ownership of five beautiful acres on the side of a mountain near Camp David, an hour from the Washington of Baltimore airports. Our accomodations are not de luxe but I think you'd be comfortable. We co-habitate with wild animals whose friendliness varies with the hunting seasons. If you remember how I had wild geesw tamed to come at my call and eat from my mouth, you might enjoy the equivalent with our bass and golden trout. Not from the mouth, though.

I do appreciate your willingness to help, not only because of our urgent need but perhaps more because it has become so rare. I'll send enough of the file in a few days. Many thanks.

Sincerely,